



ONE ALDWYCH

From laid-back drinking dens to high-end style bars, Babička Original Wormwood Vodka has found a home in every corner of London. So join Square Meal for a bar tour that puts Babička on the map

The cocktail detectives



NI JU SAN

Babička Original Wormwood Vodka from the Czech Republic is a spirit with many faces, equally at home in a hotel lounge or party bar. As you'd expect in a city with a cutting-edge bar scene, London's mixologists have been quick to exploit its potential. Always keen to find the finest libations, Square Meal took to the streets of the capital to find out exactly what they've been up to...

Our Babička hunt started at The Shop in Kensal Rise, a quirky bar/social club where the furniture and artworks are all for sale. Vintage clothes fairs and 80s nights are part of the fun here, so we were expecting something a bit different. The 'witches' brew', served in an old milk bottle, didn't disappoint: a zesty combination of Babička, lime juice, passion fruit, blackcurrant and sparkling wine.

A quick taste and we were off to a very different venue in nearby Notting Hill: Montgomery Place. The Rat Pack would have

felt right at home in these classy surrounds and would no doubt have ordered a round of Babička cocktails. The 'lady itch swizzle' gives Babička a starring role alongside dry vermouth, the house Montgomery Bitters, fresh tarragon and lemon zest.

Heading into central London, first stop was The Lobby Bar at One Aldwych. This hotel bar is a super-stylish spot for liquid refreshment – and what better choice than a Babička cocktail? The eye-catching 'bewitched apple' is a must-try. Delivered to your table in a cloud of dry ice and served with a homemade toffee apple, this sharing cocktail mixes Babička with Aperol, Campari and absinthe.

Next up, some old school grandeur at The Rivoli Bar at The Ritz London. With its glamorous 1920s décor, this cocktail lounge



DONOVAN BAR BROWNS



THE SHOP

has been synonymous with luxury living for decades. It was the perfect setting for the elegant 'master of grey' cocktail, a suave blend of Babička, Earl Grey tea, fruit liqueur, orange peel and bergamot oil.

LET'S TWIST AGAIN

Inspired by these exotic flavours, we decided to seek out a touch of the Orient at nearby Japanese restaurant Sake No Hana. With its bamboo walls and striking glass chandelier, Ni Ju San is a bijou bar that's known for its 'twists-on-a-classic' cocktail list. A Babička 'grapefruit vodka collins'

didn't disappoint: using fresh grapefruit and the very trendy yuzu saké, this bright, fresh drink, gained a herbaceous, wormwood character from the vodka.

Next, the cocktail detectives arrived



RIVOLI BAR



OFF BROADWAY



GILBERT SCOTT



NIGHTJAR



THE LUCKY PIG

at Donovan Bar at Brown's Hotel. This nu-Edwardian lounge offers old-school glamour with a twist – just like Babička. A trio of Babička cocktails is on the list: top marks went to 'castor'; a Champagne cocktail flavoured with homemade lemongrass syrup.

Heading to Fitzrovia, we found cosy underground speakeasy, The Lucky Pig, an old-time hoochie-coochie joint, complete with an upright piano for singalongs. We taste-tested the 'granny smash', which combines Babička with Aperol, grapefruit juice, mint, lime and orange bitters. Refreshing – and one of your five-a-day, too.

GREAT SCOTT

From subterranean speakeasy to gilded gothic glamour at The Gilbert Scott bar at St Pancras Renaissance Hotel. This seductive space could easily double as a Merchant Ivory film set and the elegant 'rose window' cocktail suited the surroundings perfectly. This delicate drink is made with Kummel

liqueur, fennel, caraway seeds and rhubarb to complement the fennel and coriander botanicals used in Babička.

Next the sleuths headed east on the trail, aiming for Nightjar in Shoreditch. A seriously classy speakeasy, we knew we were in for a treat when the 'Nightjar barrel punch' arrived with a dark chocolate spoon and mini Oreo cookie. The punch paired Babička with four different milks (almond, rice, soya, evaporated), vanilla maple syrup and spices: creamy, but perfectly balanced.

Our hunt ended at Off Broadway, a hip homage to New York City's neighbourhood bars near Broadway Market. A welcoming spot to hang out over classic cocktails, American craft beers and burritos, it also offered up the dangerously addictive 'yellow fever martini' (Babička and Lillet Blanc).

The cocktail detectives had cracked the case. From subterranean speakeasies to neighbourhood drinking dens; style bars to hotels, there's one vodka that fits



MONTGOMERY PLACE

BABICKA BARS

DONOVAN BAR AT BROWN'S HOTEL

Brown's Hotel, 33 Albemarle Street, W1S 4BP; 020 7493 6020; brownshotel.com/dining/the-donovan-bar

THE GILBERT SCOTT BAR

St Pancras Renaissance London Hotel, Euston Road, NW1 2AR; 020 7278 3888; thegilbertscott.co.uk/bar

THE LOBBY BAR AT ONE ALDWYCH

One Aldwych, 1 Aldwych, WC2B 4BZ; 020 7300 1000; onealdwych.com

THE LUCKY PIG

5 Clipstone Street, W1W 6BB; 020 7436 0035; theluckypig.co.uk

MONTGOMERY PLACE

31 Kensington Park Road, W11 2EU; 020 7792 3921; montgomeryplace.co.uk

NIGHTJAR

129 City Road, Old Street, EC1V 1JB; 020 7253 4101; barnightjar.com

NI J SAN

23 St James's Street, SW1A 1HA; 020 7925 8988; sakenohana.com/bar

OFF BROADWAY

63-65 Broadway Market, E8 4PH; 020 7241 2786; offbroadway.org.uk

THE RIVOLI BAR AT THE RITZ LONDON

The Ritz London, 150 Piccadilly, W1J 9BR; 020 7493 8181; theritzlondon.com

THE SHOP

75 Chamberlayne Road, NW10 3ND; 020 8969 9399; theshopnw10.com

in perfectly everywhere. Whether you're chilling out or partying hard, Babička Original Wormwood Vodka is all you need. But don't take our word for it: get on the Babička trail yourself...

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